

Department of Commerce COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy

Section 1 - Commerce Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) Program Overview

- 1.1 Program Introduction
- 1.2 Policy and Purpose
- 1.3 Definitions
- 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities
- 1.5 Authority

Section 2 – Operational Guidance and Procedures for Use of COMMITTS

- 2.1 Guiding Principle for Use of Program
- 2.2 Requirements Included in the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy
- 2.3 Exempt Acquisitions
- 2.4 Exempt Operating Units
- 2.5 Requests for Waivers from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy
- 2.6 Resources for Utilizing COMMITTS
- 2.7 Applicability of other Departmental Policies and Procedures

Attachments:

- A COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy dated April 25, 2000
- B Sample Transmittal Memorandum to the Director of Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive
- C COMMITTS Waiver Request Form
- D Instructions for Completion of COMMITTS Waiver Request Form
- E Contact Points and Contracting Offices with Delegations of Procurement Authority to utilize COMMITTS

Section 1 -- Commerce Information Technology Solution (COMMITTS) Program Overview

1.1 Program Introduction

The COMMERCE Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) program is a government-wide acquisition contract (GWAC) that provides information technology services and solutions. The COMMITTS program is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- 1) Deliver top quality IT services and solutions to meet government organizations' missions.
- 2) Deliver IT services and solutions utilizing a streamlined acquisition methodology.
- 3) Provide a talented pool of small business contractors capable of delivering the government's IT requirements.

COMMITTS provides the Commerce Department and other federal agencies with an efficient and effective means of awarding IT service and solution requirements, and assists the federal government with acquiring essential IT requirements utilizing high quality performance-focused contractors. The program does this through the use of competitively awarded performance-based task orders. Under this acquisition structure, the basic contracts do not contain fixed contract line item numbers (CLINS) or labor categories. Instead COMMITTS contractors are free to propose the best solution to the specific requirement of each government agency.

Unless exempted (see FAR 16.505(b)(2)), each task order is competed under the COMMITTS fair opportunity competitive procedure. The COMMITTS fair opportunity competitive procedure maintains an ongoing competitive environment throughout the life of the COMMITTS Program. Free from the constraints of prescribed CLINS and products, the solution-based structure significantly improves each contractor's ability to craft innovative and state-of-the-art solutions. Also, the task order award structure significantly reduces administrative burdens by eliminating technology refreshment and engineering change proposals -- which are usually required to keep the task order's and contractor's products and labor rates current, and ensures that the government receives the best value for the taxpayer.

The program provides performance-based information technology services and solutions in three major functional areas:

- Information Systems Engineering (ISE) Support Solutions
- Information System Security (ISS) Support Solutions
- Systems Operations and Maintenance (SOM) Support Solutions

Additional information about the program may be found at website address <http://www.commits.doc.gov>.

1.2 Policy and Purpose

On April 25, 2000, the Secretary of Commerce issued the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy. This policy states that all information technology (IT) [service/solution] requirements within the Department are to be satisfied through the COMMITTS GWAC unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (Reference Attachment A.)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and procedures for implementation of the Commerce Information Technology Solutions (COMMITTS) Preferred Source Policy.

1.3 Definitions

Acquisition(s) -- Includes purchase orders, delivery orders, blanket purchase agreements, task orders, contracts, interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, and memorandums of understanding.

COMMITTS -- The Commerce Information Technology Solutions Government-wide Acquisition Contract and program.

COMMITTS Program Office -- Located in Washington, DC, the COMMITTS Program Office awards, manages, and markets full service multiple-award IT contracts and related services for Commerce and other Federal agencies.

Delegated Procurement Point -- A contracting office and/or officers that have obtained authority and training to directly utilize the COMMITTS GWAC from the Head of Contracting for COMMITTS.

GWAC -- A government-wide acquisition contract.

Head of Contracting Office (HCO) -- The official who has the overall responsibility for managing an acquisition/contracting office within an operating unit.

ID/IQ -- An Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity type contract.

Information Technology (IT) -- Applied computer systems - both hardware and software, and often includes networking and telecommunications.

Office of Acquisition Management -- Located in Washington, DC, manages acquisition activities within Commerce and represents the Department on government-wide acquisition issues.

Requestor -- The individual requiring contracted IT solutions.

Requirement -- A defined need for IT support services or solutions.

Solutions -- A combination of IT services, software, and/or hardware that satisfies a requestor's acquisition requirement.

Waiver Request -- Attachment B and C to CAM Chapter 1313.370-01.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Requestor** is responsible for preparing a transmittal memorandum to the Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive (reference Attachment B), the COMMITTS Waiver Request (reference Attachment C), and submitting these documents to their servicing HCO.
- B. Heads of Contracting Offices (HCOs)** are responsible for reviewing and ensuring that the Requestor's waiver package is complete and accurate, the Requestor's recommendation is based on adequate market research, and are responsible for forwarding the waiver package to the Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive. HCOs are responsible for processing waiver requests within five (5) business days of receipt from the Requestor.
- C. Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive** is responsible for reviewing and approving/disapproving waiver requests. The Director may consult with the Chief Information Officer for Commerce or the Operating Unit, the Director for the Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Utilization, the COMMITTS Program Manager, or other agency officials in making a waiver decision. If the waiver request is disapproved, the Director shall provide the Requestor with a narrative explanation for why the request was disapproved. The Director is responsible for processing waiver requests within five (5) business days of receipt from the HCO.
- D. The Office of Acquisition Management (OAM)** has overall responsibility for timely processing waiver requests, to include the establishment and maintenance of a waiver log. Upon receipt of each waiver request, OAM will transmit a confirmation E-mail to both the Requestor and HCO. The confirmation E-mail will include a tracking number and the date the Requestor can expect a decision regarding the request.

1.5 Authority

The Commerce Department receives its authority to operate as an “executive agent” through the COMMITS Program from the Director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), pursuant to the statutory authority of section 5112(e) of the Information Technology Management Reform Act (“Clinger-Cohen Act”), 40 U.S.C. 1412(e). The executive agent designation provides COMMITS with its government-wide contracting authority to acquire IT as defined in section 5002 of the Clinger-Cohen Act.

Section 2 -- Operational Guidance and Procedures for Use of COMMITS

2.1 Guiding Principle for Use of Program

Commerce Program and Contracting Officials must consider using COMMITS at the earliest stages of acquisition planning. COMMITS shall be considered for fulfillment of all IT service and solution requirements.

2.2 Requirements Included in the COMMITS Preferred Source Policy

Examples of IT requirements that are appropriate for performance under the COMMITS Program include:

A. Information Systems Engineering (ISE) Support Services and Solutions:

For example: IT Strategic Planning, Program Assessment, and Studies
Business Process Reengineering (BPR)
Software Life Cycle Management (SLCM)
Software Engineering
Software Maintenance and Licensing
Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Electronic Commerce (EC) Support
Independent Validation and Verification (IV&V) Support
IT Research and Development
Other ISE Tasks

B. Information System Security (ISS) Support Services and Solutions:

For example: Mainframe Automated Information Security Support
Disaster Recovery, Continuity of Operations, Contingency Planning
Computer Security Awareness and Training
Computer Security Incident Response
Virus Detection, Elimination, and Prevention
Computer Security Plan Preparation
Certification of Sensitive Systems
Quantitative Risk Analysis of Large Sensitive Systems
Security for Small Systems, Telecommunications, and Client Server
Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V)
Other ISS Tasks

C. Systems Operations & Management (SOM)

For example: Office Automation Support/Help Desk
Network Support
Computer Center Technical Support
Media/Learning Center Support
Telecommunications Support
Seat Management
Independent Verification and Validation
Other SOM Tasks

Questions about an individual requirement's suitability for COMMITTS can be directed to the Requestor's servicing procurement office, the COMMITTS officials listed at the website address <http://www.commits.doc.gov>, or by calling the COMMITTS Program Office at area code (202) 482-6100.

2.3 Exempt Acquisitions

The COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy is not intended to adversely impact small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small business concerns that are performing well for Commerce organizations under existing contracts. Accordingly, the following acquisitions are exempt from the Preferred Source Policy:

- A. Requirements that will be awarded under existing Commerce or operating unit contracts held by small businesses (i.e. Census ITS.)
- B. Requirements that will be awarded under existing Commerce Blanket Purchase Agreements held by small businesses (i.e. NOAA NITES.)
- C. Simplified acquisitions with a life cycle value less than \$100,000. (Including open market acquisitions, orders against GSA federal supply schedules, or orders under other GWACs.)

IT requirements traditionally fulfilled via interagency agreement, memorandums of understanding, cooperative agreements and the like are not exempt from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy.

All other IT requirements, not covered by an exemption above, are to be awarded utilizing the COMMITTS GWAC unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (Reference Section 1.2, Section 2.1, Section 2.5, and Attachment A.)

2.4 Exempt Operating Units

The Patent and Trademark Office is exempt from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy in accordance with its Performance Based Organization (PBO) authority.

2.5 Requests for Waivers from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy

For those acquisitions that do not fall within the exemptions noted in Section 2.3, requests for waivers from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy will be accepted by the Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive. Requests for waivers from the COMMITTS Preferred Source Policy shall be processed as described below.

- A. Waivers requests shall be submitted by the Requestor on the form provided under Attachment C, and shall include the transmittal memo outlined under Attachment B.
- B. The transmittal memo and waiver request shall be drafted and submitted by the Requestor to the Head of the Contracting Office (HCO) for the Operating Unit or serving procurement office.
- C. The HCO shall review the waiver request package to ensure that adequate market research has been conducted and the information included in the waiver request is accurate and complete. If the waiver request is approved, the HCO shall submit the waiver package to:

Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of the Secretary
Office of Acquisition Management
14th & Constitution Avenue NW, Room 6422
Washington, DC 20230

Waivers may be submitted via facsimile to area code (202) 501-8122.

If the waiver package is not approved by the HCO, the HCO shall return the waiver request to the Requestor with a brief explanation of why the waiver was not forwarded for further consideration. The acquisition shall then be processed through the COMMITTS GWAC.

- D. The Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive shall review the waiver package and approve or disapprove the request.
1. If the waiver is approved, the acquisition will be conducted in accordance with the servicing procurement office's recommended acquisition strategy.
 2. If the waiver is disapproved, the acquisition shall be processed through the COMMITTS GWAC.
 3. Please note that approval will be based on the following considerations:
 - a. Use of performance-based contracting principles.
 - b. Life cycle value of the acquisition and its suitability for COMMITTS.
 - c. Performance of the requirement by a small, disadvantaged, women-owned, or Hubzone contractor.
 - d. Renewals of existing requirements where there is acceptable performance by the incumbent contractor and documentation of that performance is available in the National Institutes of Health Contractor Performance System.

To ensure the best opportunity for waiver approval, waiver requests should adequately address the criteria listed above.

- E. Waiver requests shall be processed within the following time frames:
1. The HCO shall take no longer than five (5) business days from receipt of the waiver request to review, approve and forward, or return the request to the Requestor.
 2. The Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive shall take no longer than five (5) business days from receipt of the waiver request to review, approve or disapprove, and return the waiver request to the Requestor with a courtesy copy to the HCO.

2.6 Resources for Utilizing COMMITTS

There are several resources available to the Commerce IT and acquisition communities for learning more about COMMITTS, user agencies, and available services.

- A. Visit the COMMITTS website at <http://www.commits.doc.gov>, or the COMMITTS Business Opportunity Page at <http://commitsbop.ossec.doc.gov>.
- B. E-mail the COMMITTS Program Office at COMMITTS@doc.gov with your questions.
- C. Call the COMMITTS Program Office at area code (202) 482-6100.
- D. Call your servicing procurement office for additional information.

2.7 Applicability of other Departmental Policies and Procedures

- A. Acquisitions processed under the COMMITTS GWAC are exempt from the following departmental policies:

1. Commerce Acquisition Manual Chapter 15-2, Formal Source Selection Procedures.
 2. Departmental Administrative Order 208-10, Management of Contracted Services.
- B. Streamlined documentation and review processes have been developed for COMMITS acquisitions subject to the Departmental implementation of OMB Circular A-11, Exhibit 300B. Reference website address <http://www.doc.gov/cio/oipr/ITPLANPAGE.HTM>.


Attachment A



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 25 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR Secretarial Officers
 Heads of Operating Units

FROM: William M. Daley 

SUBJECT: COMMITS Preferred Source Policy

As you know, the Department of Commerce has worked hard to become the government's leader in providing contracts to small, minority and women-owned business. We are now the number one agency in government for the second year, thanks to your help.

We have also been an innovator. One of our major innovations is the COMMITS program - through which we have fast access to a list of excellent IT firms. Everyone who has used COMMITS - including my office, NEXRAD, NESDIS, and other agencies of government has been impressed by the outstanding quality of this program.

To ensure that COMMITS reaches its full target - that is, to provide \$1.5 billion in contracts to small, minority and women-owned IT firms - I have decided to go one step further. Effective immediately, Department policy will be that ALL IT contracts are required to use the COMMITS program unless there is a legitimate reason not to do so. (A legitimate reason means, for example, that you need to purchase a service that no COMMITS company can provide).

I want to thank you again for your participation in the COMMITS program and for helping to make our vision - of leadership in creating opportunities for small and minority business - into a reality.

**Sample Memorandum to the
Director of Acquisition Management
and Procurement Executive**

[Insert Letterhead]

[Insert Date Signed by Head of Contracting Office]

MEMORANDUM FOR Director for Acquisition Management
 and Procurement Executive
 Office of Acquisition Management
 Office of the Chief Financial Officer and
 Assistant Secretary for Administration
 Office of the Secretary

THROUGH: HCO's Name
 Head of Contracting Office
 Office
 Operating Unit

FROM: Requestor's Name
 Title
 Office
 Operating Unit

SUBJECT: COMMITS Waiver Request

Attached for your review and consideration is a request for a waiver from the U.S. Department of Commerce's COMMITS Preferred Source Policy. This waiver is submitted in accordance with Commerce Acquisition Manual Part 1313.370-01, Section 2.5.

If you have any questions, or require additional information, please contact me at telephone number (xxx) xxx-xxxx or via e-mail at *Requestor@doc.gov*.

Attachment

cc: *[If applicable.]*¹

¹ For offices located in or serviced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) a courtesy copy of each waiver request shall be sent to:

Director, Acquisition and Grants Office
U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA
SSMC4, Room 4162, Routing Code: OFA6
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282

COMMITTS Waiver Request Form

Submission and Receipt Information			
1.	COMMITTS Waiver Request Number		
2.	Title of Acquisition		
3.	Date Submitted to Head of Contracting Office		
4.	Date Submitted to Procurement Executive		
5.	Date Received by the Office of Acquisition Management		
6.	Received By		
Contact Information			
7.	Requestor's Name and Title		
	(a) Office and Operating Unit		
	(b) Address		
	(c) Telephone Number		
	(d) Facsimile Number		
	(e) E-mail Address		
8.	Head of Contracting Office Name and Title		
	(a) Office and Operating Unit		
	(b) Telephone Number		
	(c) Facsimile Number		
	(d) E-mail Address		
Acquisition Information			
9.	Total Estimated Value of Acquisition		
10.	Period of Performance:	(a) From:	(b) To:
11.	Options: <i>(describe options, i.e. the term of options or number of jobs/tasks/items included as options)</i>		
12.	Projected Acquisition Schedule:	(a) Solicitation Date:	
		(b) Award Date:	

13. Justification for Not Using the COMMITS Government-wide Acquisition Contract

<i>Insert explanation for why the COMMITS vehicle cannot deliver the IT acquisition requirement:</i>

Instructions for Completion of COMMITS Waiver Request Form

Block #	Instructions
1.	To be completed by OAM .
2.	Requestor to insert brief narrative description of the requirement, e.g. “ <i>Seat Management Services for NOAA’s Western Regional Center</i> ”
3.	Requestor to insert date submitted waiver request to the HCO.
4.	HCO to insert date waiver package was submitted to OAM.
5.	OAM to insert the date when the waiver package was received.
6.	OAM to insert the name of the person who received the waiver request package.
7.	Requestor to insert requested information.
8.	HCO to insert requested information.
9.	Requestor to insert requested information. The estimated value of the acquisition should include all options.
10.	Requestor to insert requested information. The period of performance included on the form should be for the basic requirement only, <i>exclude</i> all options.
11.	Requestor to insert requested information. Options included on the form should reflect either the number of option years anticipated for the acquisition or the number of optional deliverables.
12.	HCO to insert the projected acquisition schedule.
13.	Requestor to insert explanation for why the COMMITS vehicle cannot meet the program’s IT acquisition needs.
14.	OAM to complete.
15.	OAM to complete if applicable.
16.	OAM to complete.
17.	OAM to complete.

COMMITTS Contact Points and Contracting Offices with Delegations of Procurement Authority to Utilize COMMITTS

A. COMMITTS Program Office

Address: COMMITTS Program Office
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th & Constitution Avenue NW, Room 1860
Washington, DC 20230

Telephone: (202) 482-6100 or 482-6119

Fax: (202) 501-8122

E-mail: COMMITTS@doc.gov

Website: <http://www.commits.doc.gov>

B. Commerce Operating Units with Delegations of Procurement Authority

1. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including:

a. Office of Finance and Administration

i. Acquisition Management Division

Acquisition and Grants Office

Silver Spring, MD

Website: <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~amd/index.html>

ii. Acquisition Management Division

Western Administrative Support Center

Seattle, Washington

Website: <http://www.wasc.noaa.gov/services/amd/proc.htm>

iii. Acquisition Management Division

Mountain Administrative Support Center

Boulder, Colorado

Website: http://www.masc.noaa.gov/masc/masc_prc.html

iv. Acquisition Management Division

Central Administrative Support Center

Kansas City, Missouri

Website: http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~casc/acquisitions/acq_index.htm

v. Acquisition Management Division

Eastern Administrative Support Center

Norfolk, Virginia

Website: <http://www.easc.noaa.gov/proc/eascpro.htm>

- b. Systems Acquisition Office
Silver Spring, Maryland
Website: <http://www.sao.noaa.gov/PROCURE/procure.html>
- c. National Weather Service
 - i. National Data Buoy Center
John S. Stennis Space Center, Mississippi
Website: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov>